

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 8

BOSTON GLOBE  
23 October 1985

# US seeks nuclear superiority, Soviet officer says

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MOSCOW - The chief of the Soviet general staff, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, yesterday accused the United States of using the Strategic Defense Initiative to seek nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union and a first-strike capability, and denied that the Soviets were pursuing a system similar to SDI.

He forcefully repeated in a press conference the Soviet position that if there is no agreement to limit "space-strike weapons" there will be no agreement on reducing nuclear arms, either.

Most of the press conference - four weeks before the US-Soviet summit and with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Sofia, Bulgaria, for a Warsaw Pact summit - was devoted to a defense of the Soviet arms proposal tabled in Geneva and to an attack on the logic, morality and motives of SDI.

But Akhromeyev confirmed again that "basic research" on space-based defenses is fine with Moscow, "but research and testing of fundamental components is inadmissible . . . once testing begins, the objective reality is that what is tested becomes a weapon in the arsenal."

## Research and testing

There was further clarification of the line Moscow is drawing between research and testing in a separate interview with Gen. Yuri Lebedev, deputy to Gen. Nikolai Chervov, who deals with arms control for the Soviet general staff.

"We think the moment from which research works must be prohibited is the stage when testing works begin out of the laboratory," Lebedev said. The testing of "different, separate components of space weaponry may be observed by national means of control," or verification, like spy satellites.

"Our position is like this," he said: "We stand for the prohibition of scientific research at an early stage, so they cannot spread out of the laboratory."

At yesterday's press conference and in interviews, Soviet officials have been complaining about "the multitude of voices" coming out of Washington, espe-

cially on the US interpretation of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. After national security adviser Robert McFarlane and Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Perle asserted that the treaty did not ban research, development or testing of defensive systems "based on new physical principles," Secretary of State George Shultz announced some days later that the United States would abide by a restrictive interpretation of the treaty.

## Skeptical of US intentions

Lebedev said the Soviets viewed Shultz's statement as an attempt to "neutralize" adverse reaction to the new interpretation, but remained skeptical of US intentions. "That must be clarified during the summit," he said.

But when told of a report that Shultz threatened to resign if McFarlane's interpretation stood, Lebedev said: "It would be a good sign if it is right. So we see more of a possibility of reaching a definite agreement in Geneva."

Lebedev also did not dismiss the idea of each side allowed to deploy one new missile under any new arms accord, such as the US MX or Midgetman or the Soviet SS-24 or SS-25. "Our position is that new types of weapons must be prohibited, but we need to agree on a definite date - in other words, on date, new types can be deployed, and afterwards, not." This idea was being thought about in Moscow, he said, but stressed it must be subject to negotiation.

He also said the Soviets would be willing to discuss "additional means" of verification should spy satellites prove inadequate, another major US concern.

## Cut to 6,000 warheads

The Soviets have proposed, assuming a ban on space weaponry, a treaty calling for a reduction to 6,000 nuclear warheads and bombs on each side, with no more than 60 percent in any one leg of land, sea and air forces, with a cut of 50 percent in strategic nuclear delivery vehicles. According to Lebedev and Akhromeyev, that would leave the Russians with 1,250 delivery vehicles and the United States with 1,680.

But the Soviets have defined "strategic" as any weapon capable of striking the homeland of the other side - which would include US medium-range missiles in Europe, submarine-launched cruise missiles and US bombers based in Europe and Asia. The Americans have objected to this new definition, and Lebedev agreed it represented a change from the SALT agreements, where "strategic" was defined by a missiles range, not its target.

In the press conference, Akhromeyev insisted the Soviet Union was "not doing anything similar to SDI," but merely engaging in "fundamental research in outer space, space early-warning systems" and satellites for peaceful uses in accord with the ABM treaty.

Akhromeyev said that if the United States continues with SDI while building up its nuclear forces, "the only thing left for us is to adopt measures in response in all categories of weapons, not excluding space weapons, producing a huge arms race. This seems to be the goal of the United States" in its pursuit of "nuclear superiority and a first-strike capability," he said.